

Reviews and Bibliographical Notices.

Sexual Impotence in the Male. By WM. A. HAMMOND, M.D., Surgeon-General U. S. Army (Retired List), etc., etc. Bermingham & Co., New York, 1883 ; 8vo, 274 pp.

Dr. Hammond's reputation as an author is already so well established, that it is enough to know of a book that he has written it, to know that it is both well written and instructive. "I shall endeavor (writes the author in his opening chapter) to correct certain erroneous theories which are very generally entertained, not only in regard to the normal exercise of the generative organs, but also relative to the abuses of which they are the subject." And when in this same chapter we read that he further proposes to consider certain forms of impotence of mental origin "which, though probably common enough, have not yet received the attention which they deserve," we are prepared to believe, knowing his special qualifications of experience and direction of study, that he has advanced most excellent reasons for writing this book. And if it be true, as Dr. Hammond states, that no cause, according to his experience, is so destructive to the happiness of the average man as the loss of his virile power, and that no disease is capable of causing greater loss of peace of mind, we may well believe that the author has entered upon a veritable mission of mercy in pointing out the way for relief to a large class of sufferers. And in throwing light upon the subject, Dr. Hammond cannot be charged with any attempt to conceal generative mysteries by ambiguous phrases—he draws aside the veil from weak, wicked, and diseased humanity, and places the multifarious forms of sexual inabilities and perversions before our eyes in their most uncovered physical and psychical details. Herein lies force and attraction in his work ; truth laid bare, commands our scientific if not our æsthetic interest.

Sexual impotence, Dr. Hammond defines to be, an impossibility or difficulty in the act of copulation implying some malformation, disease, or derangement of the genital organs, either primary or secondary, by reason of which there is either absence of sexual desire, absence of the power of erection, absence of the power of ejaculating the seminal fluid into the vagina, and absence of the ability to experience pleasure during the act of copulation. These four headings constitute the text for a corresponding number of chapters into which he divides the discussion of the subject.

In chapter one we note that original absence of sexual desire is rare, while acquired absence of desire is comparatively common, whether extinguished by mental preoccupation, by masturbation, or by those remarkable perversions of the sexual appetite recently studied by Westphal, Charcot and Magnan, Tamassia, and others. But by far the most common form of impotence is that treated of in chapter second, viz.: flaccidity of the organ. Dr. Hammond's enumeration of the causes which lead to this condition will indicate in a manner only too brief the wide range over which his treatment of the subject extends. Among the more prominent causes are early sexual excesses, sexual excesses in adult life, partial impotence, nocturnal emissions, obesity, emaciation, brain affections, affections of the spinal cord, diseases and injuries of the nerves, the effects of excessive horseback riding, the effect of certain medicines, as iodine, nitrate of potash, alcoholic liquors, bromides, etc.; castration, mental causes, excess of desire, superstition, and, finally, hypochondriacal condition.

Each and all of these causes is discussed fully and with abundance of illustration by citation of cases from others, and from cases observed by the author. The concluding twenty or more pages of this chapter are upon treatment.

First and foremost among remedial measures the author enjoins *rest*, not partial, but an absolute cessation from all sexual excitement during at least a year. Conjoined to physical rest, rest of mind from all lascivious thought is of almost equal importance; travel, study, and other forms of occupation, aid in securing the needed repose. Baths, douches, exercise, attention to diet and sleeping posture and the kind of bed, receive attention. Marriage for the broken-down *roué* is advised against. Under the heading of external medical measures of treatment, electricity in its different forms receives full and favorable mention. Massage, percussion, urtication, flagellation, sinapisms, and the exhausting

apparatus of Mondat, are dismissed with deservedly scant notice. Among internal remedies phosphorus and strychnia find especial favor with our author, and he describes in some detail the formulæ and the methods of administration.

Cauterization, after the manner recommended by Lallemand, and followed by very many of the surgeons of the present time, the author regards as a "most pernicious practice." "There is nothing that can be done by cauterization that cannot be better and more safely effected by electricity in any of the ways mentioned." "I have cauterized," he continues, "many patients in my time, before I knew better, and I have caused a great deal of suffering thereby, and conferred a very small modicum of good, and I therefore cauterize no longer." We agree fully with the author in this remark, but would add to it an observation which has been brought to our own attention in some of these cases, that the cautery applied to the skin over the lower portion of the spinal cord often affords the best results.

The remaining two chapters of this work are mainly interesting in that they round out to full proportions the complete plan of treatment of the subject which the author had set out to accomplish.

Not the least merit of the work is the fact that Dr. Hammond rides no medical hobby, but squarely lays before the profession the results of much reading and a large experience. We find the book entertaining, practical, and a safe guide to the student in search of aid in treating these often difficult cases. W. J. M.

A Practical Treatise on Impotence, Sterility, and Allied Disorders of the Male Sexual Organs. By SAMUEL W. GROSS, A.M., M.D., Professor of the Principles of Surgery and Clinical Surgery in the Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia, etc., etc. Second edition, thoroughly revised. Philadelphia: Henry C. Lea's Son & Co., 1883.

Almost simultaneously with the appearance of Dr. Hammond's book on Impotence, just noticed, a second edition of Dr. Gross' already classical work upon the same subject was issued by the Philadelphia publishers. It is seldom that two works upon the same subject present greater dissimilarities. So far as their resemblance in general "make-up" and manner of viewing the question of impotence are concerned the two books must have been written at the opposite poles. While Dr. Hammond views the question from a physiological and psychical stand-point, Dr. Gross